

INTEGRATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN
TEACHING PRACTICES AMONG UNIVERSITY
TEACHERS AT HIGHER LEARNING

BY

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence abilities of university teachers are more likely to establish conducive emotional teaching and learning environments through their teaching practices, thus promote students' learning motivation and engagement. Despite the emphasis on the importance of teachers' emotional intelligence abilities in teaching, it continues to be under acknowledged and under developed. This is evidenced by few studies reported on the relationship between emotions and teaching approaches in higher education. This study therefore attempts to explore the roles of emotion and integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices among university teachers in higher learning, guided by the Four-Branch Emotional Intelligence Ability Model of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004). A descriptive case study was applied with a total of ten university teachers recruited based on inclusion criteria and semi structuredly interviewed. As case study requires multiple data sources, interviews were subsequently conducted with five university students and a Deputy Vice Chancellor. In addition, scores from Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) of the university teachers were obtained and tabulated. The findings established an emergence of eleven themes and nine subthemes based on the interviews conducted with university teachers. The themes corresponded to the emotional intelligence abilities of perceiving, facilitating, understanding and managing emotion based on the Four Branch-Emotional Intelligence Ability Model. These were further triangulated with university teachers' scores of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, which were found to achieve a median of 5 and above, based on a seven Likert scale on four major domains namely self-emotional appraisal, emotional appraisal of others, use of emotion and regulation of emotion. The study demonstrated the importance of developing emotional intelligence abilities as it directly influences teaching and learning processes. As a matter of fact, the abilities are subconsciously embedded and demonstrated through teaching practices. Having observed a considerable amount of emotional intelligence skills integrated in teaching practices and its equal impact on students, training on emotional intelligence needs to be developed. Perhaps it could be included as one of the competencies required for university teachers.

ملخص البحث

من المرجح أن تكون قدرات الذكاء العاطفي لدى أساتذة الجامعات أوجدت بيئة تعليمية وتعلمية عاطفية من خلال ممارساتهم للتدريس ، وبالتالي فهي تعزز من دافعية التعلم والمشاركة بين الطلاب. وبالرغم من التركيز على أهمية قدرات المعلمين العاطفية في التدريس ، إلا أنها لا تزال دون المستوى المعرفي والتطوير. وهذا ما أكدته بعض الدراسات التي تشير إلى العلاقة بين المشاعر وأساليب التدريس في التعليم العالي. لذلك تحاول هذه الدراسة استكشاف أدوار العاطفة وممارسات التدريس التي تعكس الذكاء العاطفي لدى أساتذة الجامعات في التعليم العالي، مسترشدة بنموذج الأفرع الأربعة للذكاء العاطفي الذي طوره كل من ماير وسالوفي وكاروسو (2004). وتم تطبيق التصميم النوعي لدراسة الحالة الوصفية مع عشرة أساتذة جامعيين، تم اختيارهم وفقا لمعايير الاشتمال، وتمت مقابلتهم بشكل شبه مقنن. وبما أن دراسة الحالة تتطلب جمع بيانات من مصادر متعددة، فقد أجريت مقابلات مع خمسة طلاب جامعيين، ونائب رئيس جامعة. إضافة إلى ذلك ، تم الحصول على درجات من الأساتذة الجامعيين وجدولتها وفقا لمقياس وونج و لو للذكاء العاطفي. وأظهرت نتائج المقابلة مع الأساتذة الجامعيين أحد عشر موضوعاً رئيساً وتسع مواضيع فرعية. وتتوافق الموضوعات مع قدرات الذكاء العاطفي من إدراك وتيسير وفهم وإدارة العاطفة بناء على نموذج الأفرع الأربعة للذكاء العاطفي. وتم دعم هذه النتائج أيضاً من خلال درجات الأساتذة الجامعيين في مقياس وونج و لو للذكاء العاطفي، والتي تبين أنها تحقق متوسط 5 أو أكثر استناداً إلى مقياس ليكرت السباعي في أربعة مجالات رئيسة هي التقييم العاطفي الذاتي ، وتقييم العاطفة لدى الآخرين، واستخدام العاطفة، و تنظيم العاطفة. وقد أظهرت الدراسة أهمية تطوير قدرات الذكاء العاطفي لأنها تؤثر بشكل مباشر على عمليات التعليم والتعلم. وفي الواقع ، فإن هذه القدرات تم دمجها تلقائياً في عملية التدريس. وبعد ملاحظة قدر كبير من مهارات الذكاء العاطفي المدججة في ممارسات التدريس والتأثير المرتقب من قبل الطلاب ، فإن الذكاء العاطفي يحتاج إلى تدريب ، ويمكن إدراجه كواحد من كفاءات أساتذة الجامعات.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is contextualized as perceiving, accessing and producing emotions to understand and utilize emotions accordingly (Fer, 2004). It is generically related to different facets of personal and professional aspects, such as communication skills (Jorfi, Jorfi, Fauzy, Yaccob & Nor, (2014), job satisfaction (Alnidawy, 2015), psychological well-being (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2012; Mavrovelli, Petrides, Rieffe and Bakker, 2007), personal, social, academic and workplace success (Brackett, Rivers and Salovey, 2011) and leadership (Suciu, Petcu, & Gherhes; 2010; George, 2000). All aspects establish the unanimous view of emotional intelligence as an integral part of successful daily life functioning. Consequently, the intelligence has been recognized as being part of holistic education specifically in teaching and learning processes and regarded as one of the emerging trends in higher education. Of utmost importance is the way emotional intelligence is reflected through teachers' personal characteristics which subsequently influence teaching practices. Despite the emphasis on its importance, practices reflecting integration of emotional intelligence have often been described within a broad realm of general competencies expected of teachers such as that understanding and managing emotions may prove to be a challenge in its specific adoption by the teachers. Henceforth, the inevitable need to explore the integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices among university teachers.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The conceptualization of emotional intelligence was first indicated through Thorndike's (1937) definition of social intelligence, which was the ability to understand people (Fatt and Howe, 2003 in Fer, 2004). Decades later, Gardner (1983 in Pugh, 2008) in his proposal of multiple intelligences included intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences among seven types of intelligences. Intrapersonal indicates the recognition and management of one's own feelings, while interpersonal portrays the identification and action that takes into account others' feelings (Pugh, 2008). Both intelligences are indicative of awareness and behavioral responses towards own and others' emotions; reflecting the essential elements of emotional intelligence.

The concept continued to be expanded by Salovey and Mayer (1990) who coined the term emotional intelligence and defined it as the ability to monitor emotion, to discriminate between emotion and to use information about emotion in guiding an individual's thinking and action. It was further popularized by Goleman (1995) who conceptualized emotional intelligence as:

emotional competence that is a learned capability resulting in outstanding performance at work; it determines one's potential for learning the practical skills that are based on two competencies namely personal and social competencies (p.28)

Bar-on (1997), another prominent theorist of emotional intelligence, concluded that the intelligence is a combination of social and emotional competencies of individuals communicating with oneself and others, in coping with environmental pressure and demands (Hans, Mubeen and Al Rabani, 2013).

Henceforth, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) offered a theoretical view of emotional intelligence encompassing the ability to reason about emotion, and for emotion to enhance thinking (p.197). The view was elaborated to include the

capabilities of perceiving, accessing, generating, understanding and regulating emotion to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004). Despite offering a diverse comprehension of emotional intelligence, the conceptual formulation shares generic traits of abilities to perceive, regulate, monitor and utilize the emotion of own and that of others. The abilities and skills of emotional intelligence do not emanate from internal traits, rather, it can be acquired and developed through learning and repeated experiences at any age (Fer, 2004).

Hargreaves (2001) in his writing on emotional geographies and teaching, emphasized the fact that teaching and learning is concerned with knowledge, cognition and emotional practices. The complementary aspect of emotional practices includes an embedded practice that produces an expected or unexpected emotional alteration in the inner and outer streams of experience, for a person. Furthermore, it radiates through a person's body and streams of experience, giving emotional culmination to thoughts, feelings and actions (Denzin, 1984 in Hargreaves, 2001, p.89)

The context of the practices illuminates both conscious and subconscious emotional internalization and implementation that may be embedded during teaching and learning experiences. Similarly, Silver (1999 in Armour, 2012) stressed the essential role of emotion in a learning process and stated that, failing to involve emotional intelligence in teaching is equivalent to failing students. Meanwhile, Mortiboys (2005) reiterated two main goals in developing and using emotional intelligence in a classroom; the first being to recognize and respond to teachers' and students' feelings and the second goal is to encourage students' emotional state to one that is conducive to learning. The goals equally imply the benefits gained by students in terms of recognition of emotion by teachers and situate the learning in an

emotionally safe environment. Furthermore, the importance of developing emotional intelligence among students in higher learning is emphasized through one of the aspirations in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015 – 2025 (Higher Education). Student aspiration of leadership skills attributes includes being an effective communicator, emotionally intelligent, able to work across cultures, socially responsible, competitive, resilient, and confident (MOE, 2015). The skills are progressively facilitated throughout their learning experience during the duration of studies.

As much as students benefit from the inclusion of emotional intelligence in their learning experiences, teachers remain as the fundamental essence of such experiences. The need for teachers to possess or acquire the abilities of emotional intelligence are crucial to maximize learning experiences. According to Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2013), the need is substantiated by the fact that emotionally intelligent teachers are more capable of fostering students' learning desires, minimizing the gap in teacher-student relationships, promoting the accuracy of emotional understanding, recognizing the merge of cognitions and emotions in learning processes and creating a learning environment that is physically and psychologically safe. Syiem (2012) shared a similar perception that emotional intelligence assists teachers to make better learning and teaching plans and decisions with certainty and assurance. Furthermore, he also stated that emotionally intelligent teachers would have higher opportunities in acknowledging and understanding students' emotions.

Students' learning experiences in higher education are supported by two main elements; teachers' expertise in the subject matter and teachers' knowledge of learning and teaching methods (Mortiboys, 2005). The elements can be translated into the depth of knowledge and the methods of structuring the knowledge to be presented,

the use of materials to aid a presentation and related pedagogical approaches. Both are thought to sufficiently contribute towards students' learning experiences. As such, an emotional component, especially among university teachers, has yet to be acknowledged as part of the experiences.

However, studies pertaining to teachers' emotional intelligence have been conducted, ranging from identifying the link between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs (Sarkhosh and Rezaee, 2014), the level of emotional intelligence (Hans, Mubeen and Al-Rabani, 2013), teaching effectiveness (Ramana, 2013), managing disruptive behaviors (Jordan and Le Metais, 2000), and workplace productivity (Normah, Ramlee, Zuria and Siti Rahayah, 2006). The list of studied variables demonstrates extensive possibilities that confirm the role of emotional intelligence in teaching and learning processes.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The roles of emotion and emotional intelligence in teaching practices have not always been straightforwardly discussed. Both constructs have been highlighted subtly through terms such as “emotionally literate teachers or emotionally intelligent teachers”. The emphasis has been more on the characteristics of teachers who are categorized as having high emotional competencies, such as being optimistic, adaptable, collaborative, approachable, enthusiastic (Mortiboys, 2005), better at communicating and resolving conflict (Ming, 2003 in Birwatkar, 2014) and possessing higher levels of motivation and assertiveness (Salami, 2010 in Birwatkar, 2014). Similarly, Claxton (2006) quoted the work of Weare (2004) on “Developing the Emotionally Literate School” and listed the traits of emotionally literate teachers as high on self-regard, self-knowledge, emotional awareness and the ability to manage their own emotion,

awareness of the influences of their own emotions, and setting clear professional boundaries between themselves and students (p. 18). The question remains whether the characteristics are manifested through teaching practices such as planning, delivering, communicating and providing feedback to students.

Consequently, the focus on the recognition and actual emulation of emotional intelligence in teaching practices are noticeably lacking and somewhat limited. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) highlighted the lack of recognition, stating that

researchers know surprisingly little about the role of emotions in learning to teach, how teachers' emotional experiences relate to their teaching practices...researchers also know little about how teachers regulate their emotions (p. 328)

In addition, the effort to emphasize the integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices is not substantially highlighted. Pugh (2008) acknowledged that a limited number of literatures has been published on the development of teachers' emotional intelligence, despite the emphasis on its role in increasing the success rate of teaching practices. Brina (2003 in Armour, 2012), on the other hand, urged for attention to be paid to the emotional impact of learning materials in designing curriculum. She further stressed that careful consideration should be given to optimize the presentation of designed materials.

The past decade has seen a growing interest in emotional intelligence and teaching in higher education. Mortiboys (2005) proposed the idea of teaching with emotional intelligence that suggested subject matter expertise, pedagogical competence and emotional intelligence to be integrated as elements of learning experiences. According to Mortiboys (2005), an excellent university teacher can be defined as integrating teaching and learning methods, subject expertise and emotional intelligence. The integration is demonstrated in the below figure;

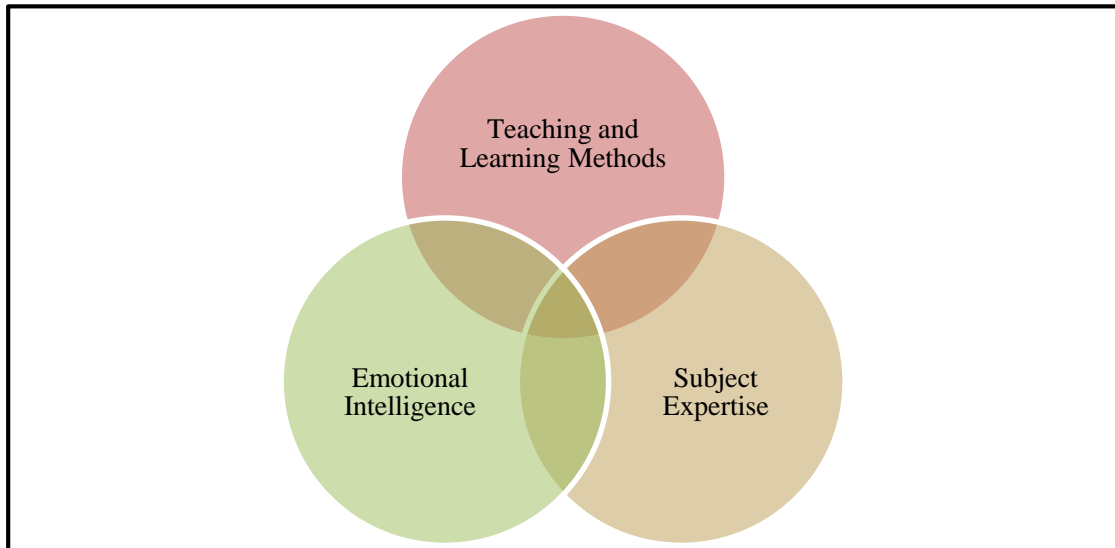


Figure 1.1 Teaching and Learning Methods, Subject Expertise and Emotional Intelligence (Mortiboys, 2012, p.3)

The emotional dimension, which was not emphasized previously, is more likely to establish a conducive emotional environment through teachers' behaviors, language, and activities conducted in the classroom (Mortiboys, 2005), which thus promotes learning motivation and increases the level of engagement among the students. Moreover, according to Bikatwar (2014), college professors who actively demonstrated emotional intelligence traits accomplished and sustained a high-quality relationship with their students and created a nurturing learning environment. Despite the emphasis on the importance of teachers' emotional experience in teaching (Trigwell, 2012), it continues being under acknowledged and developed (Mortiboys, 2005). This is evidenced by few studies reported on the relationship between emotions and teaching approaches in higher education. Among the few studies conducted, most tended to focus only on university teachers' emotional management (Trigwell, 2012).

Hence, the vital roles of emotion in teaching are undeniable, even more so among university teachers who are said to combine personal, emotional and professional identities in teaching practices. The effect of emotional perception,

understanding, usage and management may become the fundamental principles towards effective teaching (Nias, 1989, 1993, 1996, 1999a, 1999b in Shiyun and Wei, 2013)

This study therefore attempts to explore the integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices reflecting among university teachers in higher learning.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to explore the roles of emotion and the integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices among university teachers in higher learning. In light of the roles of emotion in teaching, the study specifically focused on university teachers' perceptions and descriptions of emotional competencies, otherwise termed as emotional abilities in teaching. Meanwhile, the importance of integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices, the practices implying emotional intelligence and suggestions to enhance the integration guided the overall purpose of the study. The purposes served to clarify the extent of the roles of emotion, emotional intelligence and teaching practices as constructs, which influenced university teachers' abilities in perceiving, facilitating, understanding and managing their own as well as students' emotions. Consequently, the abilities are reflected through the way they delivered lessons, communicated formally (within teaching and learning settings) and informally (outside of teaching and learning settings) with students, how they assess students' works and other related interactions. The prominent influence of the abilities on students' learning experiences may be demonstrated in their interests and motivation levels.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the roles of emotion in teaching practices among university teachers at higher learning.
2. To explore the integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices among university teachers at higher learning.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central research question was as follows;

How does emotional intelligence integrate in teaching practices among university teachers at higher learning?

Consequently, there were two sub questions;

1. What are the roles of emotion in teaching practices among university teachers at higher learning?
 - 1.1 How do university teachers perceive the roles of emotion in teaching?
 - 1.2 How do university teachers describe emotional abilities in teaching?
2. How do university teachers at higher learning integrate emotional intelligence in their teaching practices?
 - 2.1 How do university teachers at higher learning see the importance of integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practices?
 - 2.2 What are the teaching practices integrated with emotional intelligence that affect students' learning experiences at higher learning?
 - 2.3 What are the suggestions to enhance the integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practices at higher learning?

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework underlying this study was the Four-Branch Emotional Intelligence Ability Model by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004).

1.7.1 Four Branch Emotional Intelligence Ability Model

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) divided emotional intelligence abilities into four branches, namely the perception of emotion, the facilitation of emotion, the understanding of emotion and the management of emotion. The branches are shown in the figure below;

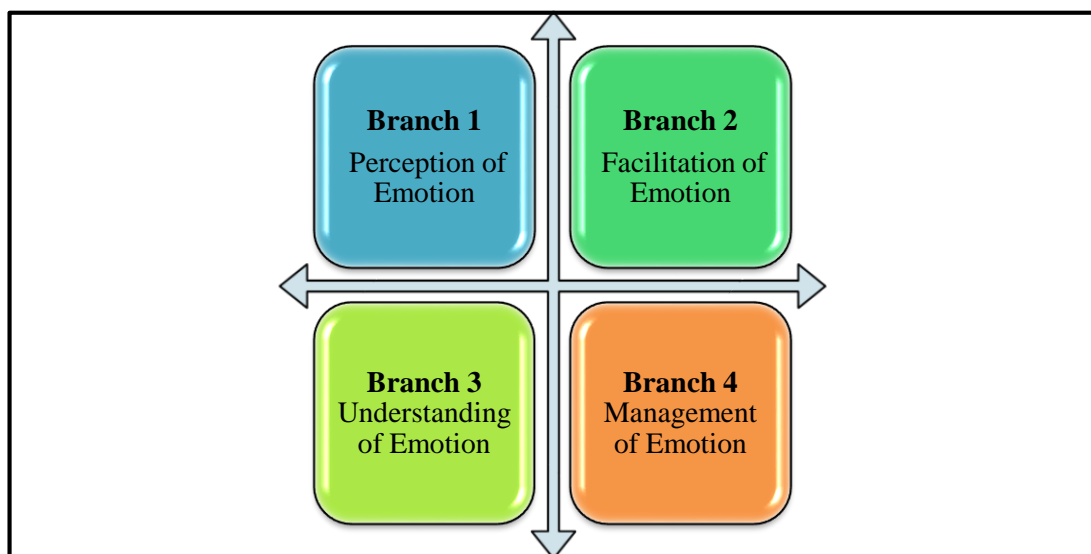


Figure 1.2 Four branches of emotional intelligence
(Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004, p.199)

Each branch describes a specific ability expected of emotional intelligence characteristic;

Branch 1 – The perception of emotion involves the ability to recognize emotion in other’s facial and postural expressions. In this study, it refers to a university teacher’s ability to recognize students’ physical (facial and postural) expressions.